

Wrapping Up Social Skills for the Holidays.

The holidays are a fun and exciting time but can also become overwhelming and confusing for children who struggle with communication and social skills. This session is designed to help navigate social situations, hidden rules, and potential problems related to the holidays.

Holiday Topics

- Handling Holiday Parties
- Handling Holiday Outings and Shopping
- Giving Gifts and Receiving Gifts
- Making Conversation with Relatives and Friends





Holiday Parties

Home Alone: Pizza Scene

- youtu.be/iAznxCJa-bw

- Prepare your Child: Let him/her know what is going to happen, where it will take place, who will be there, and what you will be eating.
- What is expected/ unexpected? Use role playing and problem-solving activities
- Be aware of the sensory input such as lights, noises, and smells, and try to minimize or introduce slowly.
- Provide a safe space or retreat from the noise and chaos. Use a safe word or break card to signal when a break is needed.



Holiday Party Tips



Holiday Parties continued...

- Bring a bag of familiar toys or sensory regulation tools (i.e weighted blanket).
- Prep family and friends. If you aren't comfortable providing details about your child, offer ideas such as " Leo likes high fives more than hugs."
- Enlist a Support Team. Employ a family member to watch your child while you eat or visit.

“I Need a Break” Cards





Handling Holiday Outings and Shopping

- Prepare your Child: Let him/her know what is going to happen, where it will take place, who will be there, and what you will be eating.
- Be aware of the sensory input such as lights, noises, and smells, and try to minimize or introduce slowly.
- Avoid Crowds. For example rather than attend a holiday parade consider a drive through light display.
- Search Sensory friendly Santas and activities. [Connecting for Kids, Google.](#)
- Stay home activities. (baking cookies, holiday crafts).
- Make swaps and adjustments. Shorten the time or change the activity.

A close-up photograph of a hand holding a gift wrapped in brown paper. The gift is decorated with a pine cone and sprigs of greenery, tied with white string. The hand is wearing an orange knitted sweater. The background is a light blue surface.

Giving Gifts and Receiving Gifts

A Christmas Story: Deranged
Easter Bunny

- youtu.be/B3C22C-SjiM

Giving & Receiving Gifts



- Let your child know what is “Expected” and “Unexpected” when giving, receiving, or sharing gifts.
- Participate in role play and problem-solving activities.
- Utilize social stories and video modeling
- Simplify opening presents (i.e minimize tape, unseal envelopes).



Social Stories

Christmas Pragmatics – Social Stories Available at:

www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Christmas-Social-Skills-407049



Making Conversation with Relatives and Friends

- Participate in role play activities. Pretend to be family members and friends in different situations
- Utilize video modeling
- Introduce and implement a “friend file.”
- Prep family members and friends for ways to engage in conversation.



Holiday Conversation Starters

- What is your favorite food on Thanksgiving ?
- Do you have a turkey bowl?
- Do you have an elf on the shelf?
- What's your favorite holiday movie?
- What was your favorite Christmas gift?
- What will you get your mom for Christmas?
- Have you ever seen a reindeer?
- Do you have colored or white lights on your tree?
- Do you send out Christmas cards?



Resources and Bibliography

Resources:

- Teachers Pay Teachers
- Boom Cards

Christmas Pragmatics: Copyright:
Jenna Rayburn, MA, CCC-SLP
SpeechRoomNews.blogspot.com

Enjoying the Holidays with Your
Special Needs Child: Very Well Family.

Solutions for Holiday Survival with
Special Needs Kids:
www.speechbuddy.com